

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please AMEND claims 13, 15-21 and 24-26, as follows. For the Examiner's convenience, all claims currently pending have been reproduced below.

1-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A supporting apparatus for supporting a ~~weight of a~~ member, which mounts a movable stage, above ~~[[to]]~~ a base, said apparatus comprising:

a ~~first~~ permanent magnet arranged on one of the member and the base;

a ~~second permanent magnet unit~~ pair of permanent magnets arranged on the other of the member and the base, and arranged so that said ~~first~~ permanent magnet is interposed therebetween; and

a linear motor which is arranged between the member and the base, and provides a force which acts on the member,

wherein magnetized directions of said ~~first~~ permanent magnet and said ~~second permanent magnet unit~~ pair of permanent magnets are perpendicular to a gravity direction, which is a direction of gravity acting on ~~[[of]]~~ the member, and

~~wherein a width of said second pair of permanent magnet unit in a perpendicular direction to the magnetized directions and the gravity direction~~ magnets is different from a width of said ~~first~~ permanent magnet in a direction perpendicular to the magnetized directions and the gravity direction, and

said permanent magnet and said pair of permanent magnets are configured to generate a force in the gravity direction and to support the member above the base in the gravity direction through the force.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said ~~second~~ pair of permanent magnet unit is magnets are arranged on the base.

16. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 15, further comprising changing means for changing a region in which said ~~first~~ permanent magnet and said ~~second~~ pair of permanent magnet unit magnets face each other.

17. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said changing means moves ~~a plurality of magnets which constitute said second~~ said pair of permanent magnet unit magnets in ~~the perpendicular~~ a direction perpendicular to the magnetized directions and the gravity direction.

18. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said ~~first~~ permanent magnet and said ~~second~~ pair of permanent magnet unit magnets are arranged so that a spring constant ~~becomes~~ is substantially zero in the ~~perpendicular~~ perpendicular to the magnetized directions and the gravity direction.

19. (Currently Amended) An exposure apparatus for exposing a substrate to a pattern ~~onto a substrate mounted on a stage~~, said apparatus comprising:

a movable stage which holds the substrate;

a member which mounts said movable stage; and

a supporting apparatus, as defined in claim 13, for supporting ~~[[a]]~~ said member ~~mounted on the stage.~~

20. (Currently Amended) A ~~device manufacturing~~ method of manufacturing a device, said method comprising:

a step of exposing a substrate to a pattern ~~onto a substrate~~ by using an exposure apparatus as defined in claim 19; ~~and~~

a step of developing the substrate; and

a step of processing the developed substrate to manufacture the device.

21. (Currently Amended) A supporting apparatus for supporting a ~~weight of a~~ member, which mounts a movable stage, above ~~[[to]]~~ a base ~~in a first direction~~, said supporting apparatus comprising:

a ~~first~~ permanent magnet arranged on the member, and magnetized in a first direction perpendicular to a gravity direction, which is a direction of gravity acting on the member;

a ~~second~~ pair of permanent magnet unit magnets arranged on the base, and arranged so that said ~~first~~ permanent magnet is interposed therebetween; and

driving means for driving said ~~second pair of~~ permanent ~~magnet unit~~ magnets, in order to change a facing area of said ~~first and second~~ permanent magnet and said pair of permanent magnets, in a second direction perpendicular to the first direction and the gravity direction,

wherein said permanent magnet and said pair of permanent magnets are configured to generate a force in the gravity direction and to support the member above the base in the gravity direction through the force.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Currently Amended) An exposure apparatus for exposing a substrate to a pattern ~~onto a substrate mounted on a stage~~, said apparatus comprising:

a movable stage which holds the substrate;

a member which mounts said movable stage; and

a supporting apparatus, as defined in claim 21, for supporting ~~[[a]]~~ said member mounted ~~on the stage~~.

25. (Currently Amended) A ~~device-manufacturing~~ method of manufacturing a device, said method comprising:

a step of exposing a substrate to a pattern ~~onto a substrate~~ by using an exposure apparatus as defined in claim 24; ~~and~~

a step of developing the substrate; and

a step of processing the developed substrate to manufacture the device.

26. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the width of said ~~second pair of permanent magnet magnets in the direction perpendicular to the gravity direction and the magnetized directions~~ is larger than the width of said first permanent magnet in the direction perpendicular to the gravity direction and the magnetized directions.

27. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said driving means is controlled based on information related to a position of the movable stage.